

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

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TAGS: PINT, GT

SUBJECT: NY TIMES ARTICLE ON GUATEMALAN ELECTIONS.

1. MARCH 6 NY TIMES CARRIED FOLLOWING STORY:

BEGIN TEXT:GUATEMALAN SAYS ELECTION IS RIGGED; OPPOSITION
CLAIMS VICTORY BUT DECLARES GOVERNMENT PLANS TO WIN BY
FRAUD.

SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES

GUATEMALA MARCH 5--THE MAIN OPPOSITION CANDIDATE FOR
PRESIDENT SAID TODAY THAT HE HAD WON A ABSOLUTE MAJORITY
IN THE VOTING LAST SUNDAY, BUT WARNED THAT THE GOVERNMENT
WAS PREPARING TO DECLARE ITS OWN CANDIDATE THE WINNER.

AT NEWS CONFERENCE THIS MORNING GEN. EFRAIN RIOS MONTT, THE
CANDIDATE OF THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRAT-LED NATIONAL OPPOSITION
FRONT, SAID, "MY HISTORIC RESPONSIBILITY AND MY HONOR AS A
SOLDIER OBLIGE ME TO REJECT EMPHATICALLY IN THE NAME OF THE
PEOPLE THE FRAUD THAT IS BEING ATTEMPTED."

HE THEN CALLED FOR "PEACEFUL RESISTANCE" TO THE GOVERNMENT.
BUT ADDED THAT "TO HOLD A PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION NOW WOULD
BE TAKING THE PEOPLE TO THEIR DEATH."

GOVERNMENT FIGURES

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THE GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED THIS MORNING THAT SO FAR GEN.

KJELL EUGENIO LAUGERUD GARCIA OF THE RULING RIGHT-WING

COALITION HAD WON 175,940 VOTES, GENERAL RIOS MONTT 145,840 AND COL. ERNESTO PAIZ NOVALES OF THE CENTRIST REVOLUTIONARY PARTY 85,941.

ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL OPPOSITION FRONT, HOWEVER, GENERAL RIOS MONTT HAS SO FAR WON 335,427 VOTES, GENERAL LAUGERUD GARCIAL 201,712 AND COLONEL PAIZ NOVALES 108,992. EVEN GOVERNMENT AND ARMY SOURCES SAID PRIVATELY THAT GENERAL RIOS MONTT HAD WON.

AS THEIR RESULTS CAME IN YESTERDAY, THERE WAS A MOMENT WHEN THE GOVERNMENT SEEMED WILLING TO ACCEPT DEFEAT. IT STOPPED A MARCH ON THE OPPOSITION-HELD CITY HALL BY SOME 3,000 ARMED PEASANTS AND LIFTED ITS CONTROL OF RADIO AND TELEVISION TRANSMISSIONS.

THE SIGNS CHANGE
LATER IN THE DAY, HOWEVER, REPORTEDLY AFTER THE RULING NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENT AND KEY BUSINESS GROUPS HAD APPLIED PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT; THE SIGNS ONCE AGAIN BEGAN TO POINT TO VICTORY FOR GENERAL LAUGERUD.

PRESIDENT CARLOS ARANA OSORIO RECEIVED GENERAL RIOS MONTT LAST NIGHT AND ASSURED HIM THAT THE ELECTORAL RESULTS WOULD BE RESPECTED. NOW, HOWEVER, IT SEEMS THAT THE OFFICIAL RESULTS WILL SHOW GENERAL LAUGERUD TO HAVE WON.

SO FAR THE ARMY HAS KEPT CLEAR OF THE POLITICAL CRISIS, BUT ITS SENIOR OFFICERS HAVE BEEN MEETING ALMOST WITHOUT INTERRUPTION.

MILITARY SOURCES INDICATED THAT KEY COMMANDERS RECOGNIZED THAT GENERAL RIOS MONTT HAD WON THE ELECTION, BUT THEY WERE APPARENTLY RELUCTANT TO INTERFERE DIRECTLY, EVEN IF ONLY TO GUARANTEE THE FAIRNESS OF THE ELECTIONS.

IN THE ABSENCE OF MILITARY INTERVENTION, A NEW WAVE OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE SEEMS INVITABLE HERE WHERE IT HAS BEEN
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CONTINUAL FOR THE LAST 20 YEARS.

PRESIDENT ARANA ELIMINATED A STRONG LEFTIST GUERRILLA MOVEMENT THROUGH INDISCRIMINATE REPRESSION OF ALL OPPOSITION GROUPS IN 1970 AND 1971. SINCE THEN, HOWEVER, THE OPPOSITION HAS REORGANIZED ITSELF AND MAY NOT BE WILLING TO ACCEPT ITS DEFEAT WITHOUT SOME RESPONSE.

THE GOVERNMENT PARTIES, ON THE OTHER HAND, HAVE WELL-
TRAINED "SHOCK TROOPS," WHO MAY BE USED AGAINST THE
OPPOSITION IN ANTICIPATION OF LEFTIST ACTIVITIES.

ALREADY YESTERDAY THE OPPOSITION MAYOR OF THE PROVINCIAL
CAPITAL OF CUILAPA IN THE SOUTH OF GUATEMALA, VICTOR
MANUEL MONTERROSO GRANADOS, WAS MURDERED. THREE MEDICAL
STUDENTS SENT BY THE OPPOSITION TO SUPERVIZE VOTING IN
THE EASTERN DEPARTMENT OF ZACAPA WERE FOUND DEAD BESIDE
A HIGHWAY KISSINGER

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